

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Withdrawn): A plasma processing method comprising the step of plasma processing an object to be processed body using a plasma processing apparatus for allowing plasma generating means to cause plasma igniting, wherein

an amount of charges deposited on the object to be processed body at least at the time of plasma extinction is reduced.

Claim 2 (Withdrawn): A plasma processing method comprising the step of plasma processing an object to be processed body placed on a lower electrode using a plasma processing apparatus which has an upper electrode and the lower electrode, a spacing therebetween being adjustable, and which causes plasma igniting by applying high-frequency power to at least one of the upper and lower electrodes, wherein

the spacing is made larger at least at the time of plasma extinction than during plasma processing.

Claim 3 (Withdrawn): The plasma processing method according to claim 2, wherein first high-frequency power is applied to the upper electrode, and second high-frequency power having a lower frequency than the first high-frequency power is applied to the lower electrode.

Claim 4 (Withdrawn): The plasma processing method according to claim 2, wherein the lower electrode is moved away from the upper electrode to increase the spacing.

Claim 5 (Withdrawn): The plasma processing method according to claim 3, wherein the first high-frequency power is turned off after the second high-frequency power is turned off.

Claim 6 (Withdrawn): The plasma processing method according to claim 2, wherein etching is performed as the plasma processing.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A plasma processing apparatus comprising:
a lower electrode for placing an object to be processed thereon;
an upper electrode disposed above the lower electrode so as to oppose it;
an adjusting mechanism for adjusting a spacing between the upper and lower electrodes by raising or lowering the lower electrode, the adjusting mechanism including a drive driving mechanism; and

a high-frequency power supply for applying high-frequency power to at least one of the upper and lower electrodes, the high-frequency power being applied to either one of the electrodes to cause plasma igniting,

wherein the drive mechanism maintains the spacing at a constant second spacing, which is larger than a constant first spacing, for an initial period of time immediately after the time of plasma ignition,

wherein the drive mechanism subsequently sets ~~maintains~~ the spacing ~~[[at a]]~~ from the constant second spacing directly to the constant first spacing after the time of plasma ignition,

wherein the drive mechanism subsequently sets the spacing from the constant first spacing directly to ~~[[a]]~~ the constant second spacing, ~~which is larger than the first spacing,~~ before the time of plasma extinction.

Claim 8 (Original): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 7, further comprising:

a first high-frequency power supply for applying first high-frequency power to the upper electrode; and

a second high-frequency power supply for applying second high-frequency power having a lower frequency than the first high-frequency power to the lower electrode.

Claim 9 (Original): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the adjusting mechanism has a drive mechanism for moving the lower electrode away from the upper electrode.

Claim 10 (Original): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the first high-frequency power is turned off after the second high-frequency power is turned off.

Claim 11 (Original): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 7, wherein etching is performed as the plasma processing.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 7,

wherein the driving mechanism sets the spacing to the first spacing after the time of plasma ignition.

Claims 13-14 (Canceled).

Claim 15 (New): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 7,
wherein the first spacing is a narrowest spacing provided by the apparatus during
between the time of the plasma ignition and the time of plasma extinction.

Claim 16 (New): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 15, wherein
the first spacing is 17 mm.